



## CREATING PARTNERSHIPS

**Purpose** The purpose of this activity is to set up the structure to create partnerships to help students achieve student learning standards, to implement the school vision, and/or to refine current partnerships to better relate to student learning standards.

**Target Audience** Staff and potential or current partners.

**Time** Two hours.

**Materials** Copies of the mission, vision, continuous school improvement plan, data profile, student learning standards, chart pad paper, markers, self-stick notes, computer, and projector.

### Overview

Many school staff think *partnership* is synonymous with donations, fund-raising events, volunteers, and parents helping with students' homework. They think of the end product being money, "stuff," and homework turned in.

Quality partnerships, where both parties contribute and both parties benefit, can help the school achieve its mission and vision, and help the entire school community prepare students for the 21st Century.

By starting with what we want students to know and be able to do, or a Graduate Profile, school staff and partners can brainstorm appropriate ways to work together to achieve the school's vision.

### Process Protocol

If your school has not worked with partners in meaningful ways to implement the vision, or to help achieve a Graduate Profile, you need to plan to do so. Below are steps in creating partnerships that will help your school accomplish the school vision, and create graduates ready for the 21st Century.

- Step 1.** Clarify, as a staff, the vision for the school, and what you want students to know and be able to do when they graduate, a Graduate Profile, if you will. It would be ideal to consider the PreK-12 curriculum.
- Step 2.** Within the continuous school improvement plan to implement the school vision, include partnership involvement to help meet student learning standards.
- Step 3.** Establish a partnership team whose responsibilities include researching, coordinating, creating, and assuring the implementation of win-win partnerships to help achieve the Graduate Profile.
- Step 4.** Let the community know that you are looking for win-win partnerships to help achieve the Graduate Profile.
- Step 5.** Establish a time to meet to with prospective partners.
- Step 6.** Meet with interested partners to exchange information about student learning standards, the Graduate Profile, the school vision, and the potential partners' organizations, and to determine how each can participate:
  - ♦ Partnership team describes the school's values and beliefs, mission, vision, student learning standards, Graduate Profile, current operations and processes, and identifies what they need from partners.

**Process Protocol (Continued)**

- ♦ Prospective partners describe what they need graduates to know and be able to do, why they want a partnership with the school, and how they would like to partner.
  - ♦ Set up small groups of staff and partners.
  - ♦ Have the small groups pick some standards, brainstorm how teachers, businesses, and parents can help students achieve these standards. Place ideas on self-stick notes. Group the self-stick notes and refine the thinking about what you would like each partner to do, coming to agreement on useful and realistic activities.
  - ♦ Have the small groups share their ideas with the larger group.
  - ♦ As a group, determine best strategies, by grade level/subject area for a continuum of learning for students.
- Step 7.** Prepare an agreement, establish outcomes, and determine how the partnership will be monitored, evaluated, and improved on a continuous basis:
- ♦ Establish regular meeting times.
  - ♦ Identify costs and personnel requirements for the partnerships.
- Step 8.** Implement the partnerships.
- Step 9.** Monitor, evaluate, and improve the partnerships.
- Step 10.** Celebrate and thank the partners for their contributions.

**Comments to the Facilitator**

Adjust this activity to meet the specific needs of the school, as determined from the comprehensive data analysis work. Consider using the problem-solving cycle (Appendix I) when trying to understand why students are not achieving specific standards and how partnerships can help students achieve the standards.